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Comissao Directiva da FRETILIN • Comando das FALINTIL • Resistência Nacional Estudantil de Timor Leste - RENETIL

PRESS RELEASE

Two East Timorese student leaders detained in Jakarta since 19 November following a peaceful protest over the Dili massacre have been formally charged with subversion.

José Ramos-Horta, Special Representative of the National Council of Maubere Resistance in East Timor, said he "is deeply concerned at the impact of the news on the mental and physical health of the two, one of whom is already very weak and ill, because subversion carries a maximum penalty of death under Indonesian law".

One of the students, Joao Freitas da Camara, has been in detention in Jakarta's Metropolitan Police Station for over 2 months since he led a peaceful protest following the Santa Cruz massacre in Dili in which at least 100 people died. His colleague, Fernando de Araujo, was arrested in Bali in November and transferred to Jakarta.

The two are kept isolated from 20 other East Timorese detainees. They do not have adequate food, medical attention or support from family, church or friends. They have refused to sign a statement accepting Indonesia's incorporation of East Timor and apologising to President Suharto.

"These students are political prisoners", said Ramos-Horta. "Countries participating in the UN Commission of Human Rights in Geneva, should call for their immediate release. It is a total perversion of justice that peaceful protesters should be threatened with the death sentence when the Indonesian troops who committed mass murder in Dili on 12 November have so far escaped any penalty".

"It makes a mockery of the whole U.N. human rights system when a nation such as Indonesia is sitting as a full member of the Commission", Mr Ramos-Horta said.

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Update on East Timorese political prisoners in Jakarta

1. Twenty two East Timorese continue to be detained in the Metropolitan police station in Jakarta. They comprise 21 detainees arrested 19 November 1991 following a peaceful protest over the Santa Cruz massacre and a colleague from Bali, Fernando Araujo, who was transferred to Jakarta after his arrest in Denpasar. The 21 have now been detained for 80 days.

2. On 6 February 1992, reliable sources in Jakarta reported that two of this group have been formally charged with subversion. They are JOAO FREITAS DA CAMARA, regarded by the authorities as the leader of the older students, and FERNANDO DE ARAUJO from Denpasar.

   Both men have already been charged with criminal offences under articles 154 and 155 of the Criminal Code and the police have completed preparation of evidence against them on these counts. A second investigation has now commenced, undertaken by the Public Prosecutor, based on the Subversion Law. They are receiving visits and legal advice from the Indonesian Legal Aid Institute.

3. Fernando de Araujo is very weak and sick. He and Joao Freitas da Camara are detained together in one cell separate from the rest of the group with whom they are denied contact. They do not have adequate food, medical attention and support. Both refuse to sign a statement which recognises the incorporation of East Timor, asks pardon of President Suharto, and accepts the Dili killings as a local event with no international significance. It is possible that the charge of subversion is being used to bring extra psychological pressure to bear to sign this apology.

   The two men are receiving no attention from the prison doctor who is on leave attending a course. Both are devout Catholics but have had no visit from a priest or other church person. No date has been set for their trial. No family has visited (distance from Dili being a major factor) and it is obviously extremely difficult for members of the East Timorese community in Jakarta to be seen to take an interest in their situation, particularly now that they are branded as subversives.

4. 15 of the rest of the group are said to be ill mainly because of the poor food and lack of vitamins and medical attention.

5. 16 of the group have revoked the apologies they signed on 18 January when they were promised they would be released without conditions if they signed. They wish to return to their studies. The other 6 have refused to sign any apologies.

6. Though the situation is somewhat confusing, owing to extensions of time and the role of different jurisdictions, it appears the group can be detained legally until 24 February. This suggests that trials could commence before or on that date, unless there is political intervention to release some or all of them.

Requests

a. That diplomats in Jakarta visit the detainees in prison.

b. That diplomats in Jakarta observe any trials that take place.

c. That the United Nations Human Rights Centre sends an urgent communiquè to Indonesian authorities regarding this matter.